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# GANDHISM, THE DOOM OF THE UNTOUCHABLES

**Dr. B. R. Ambedkar.**

"The Untouchables must follow their hereditary professions. That those occupations they are unclean is no answer: That before the occupation became hereditary it was the result of force and not volition does not matter. The argument of Gandhism is that what is once settled is settled forever even if it was wrongly settled. Under Gandhism the Untouchables are to be eternal scavengers. There is no doubt that the Untouchables would much prefer the orthodox system of Untouchability. A compulsory state of ignorance imposed upon the Untouchables by the Hindu Shastras made scavenging bearable. But Gandhism which compels an educated Untouchable to do scavenging is nothing short of cruelty. The grace in Gandhism is a curse in its worst form. The virtue of the anti Untouchability plank in Gandhism is quite illusory. There is no substance in it.

What else is there in Gandhism which the Untouchables can accept as opening a way for their ultimate salvation? Barring this illusory campaign against Untouchability Gandhism is simply another form of Sanatanism which is the ancient name for militant orthodox Hinduism. What is there in Gandhism which is not to be found in orthodox Hinduism? There is caste in Hinduism, there is caste in Gandhism Hinduism believes in the law of hereditary profession, so does Gandhism. Hinduism enjoins cow-worship. So does Gandhism. Hindusim upholds the law of *karma*, predestination of man's condition in this world, so does Gandhism. Hinduism accepts the authority of the Shastras, So does Gandhism. Hinduism believes in *avatars* or incarnations of God. So does Gandhism. Hinduism believes in idols. so does Gandhism. All that Gandhism has done is to find a philosophic justification for Hinduism and its dogmas. Hinduism is bald in the sense that it is just a set of rules which bear on their face the appearance of a crude and cruel system. Gandhism supplies the philosophy which smoothens its surface and gives it the appearance of decency and respectability and so alters it and embellishes it as to make it even attractive. What philosophy does Gandhism propound to cover the nudity of Hinduism? This philosophy can be put in a nutshell. It is a philosophy which says that "All that is in Hinduism is well, all that is in Hinduism is necessary for public good." Those who are familiar with Voltaire's *Candide* will recognize that it is the philosophy of Master Pangiloss and recall the mockery Voltaire made of it. The Hindus are of course pleased with it. No doubt it suits them and accords with their interest. Prof. Radhakrishnan — whether out of genuine feeling or out of sycophancy we need not stop to inquire has gone to the length of describing Mr. Gandhi as 'God on earth.' What do the Untouchables understand this to mean? To them it means that: "This God: by name Gandhi came to console an afflicted race: He saw India and changed it not saying all is well and will be, if the Hindus will only fulfil the law of caste.' He told the afflicted race, 'I have come to fulfil the law of caste' Not a tittle, not a jot shall I allow to abate from it."

What hope can Gandhism offer to the Untouchables? To the Untouchables Hinduism is a veritable chamber of horrors. The sanctity and infallibility of the Vedas, Smritis and Shastras, the iron law of caste, the heartless law of karma and the senseless law of status by birth are to be Untouchables veritable instruments of torture which Hinduism has forged against the Untouchables. These very instruments which have mutilated, blasted and blighted the life of the Untouchables are to be found intact and untarnished in the bosom of Gandhism. How can the Untouchables say that Gandhism is a heaven and not a chamber of horrors as Hinduism has been? The only reaction and a very natural reaction of the Untouchables would be to run away from Gandhism.

Gandhists may say that what I have stated applies to the old type of Gandhism. There is a new

Gandhism, Gandhism without caste. This has reference to the recent statement of Mr. Gandhi that caste is an anachronism. Reformers were naturally gladdened by this declaration of Mr. Gandhi. And who would not be glad to see that a man like Mr. Gandhi having such terrible influence over the Hindus, after having played that most mischievous part of a social reactionary, after having stood out as the protagonist of the caste system, after having beguiled and befooled the unthinking Hindus with arguments which made no distinction between what is fair and foul should have come out with this recantation? But is this really a matter for jubilation? Does it change the nature of Gandhism? Does it make Gandhism a new and a better 'ism' than it was before. Those who are carried away by this recantation of Mr. Gandhi, forget two things. In the first place all that Mr. Gandhi has said is that caste is an anachronism. He does not say it is an evil. He does not say it is anathema. Mr. Gandhi may be taken to be not in favour of caste. But Mr. Gandhi does not say that he is against the *Varna* system. And what is Mr. Gandhi's *varna* system? It is simply a new name for the caste system and retains all the worst features of the caste system.

The declaration of Mr. Gandhi cannot be taken to mean any fundamental change in Gandhism. It cannot make Gandhism acceptable to the Untouchables. The Untouchables will still have ground to say: "Good God! Is this man Gandhi our Saviour?"

## CONGRATULATIONS

Mr. H. M. Jagannatham a Prominent merchant of scheduled castes of Madras is nominated to the Madras Legislative Council.

Mrs. Meenambal Sivaraj Messrs. H. M. Jagannatham, L. C. Guruswami and Rao Bahadur N. Sivaraj have been nominated for the senate of the Madras University.

## A. I. S. C. F. WORKING COMMITTEE.

The working committee of the All India Scheduled Castes Federation will meet on the 4th June at Rajgriha, Dadar, Bombay. Baba saheb Ambedkar has kindly consented to attend the meeting.

*General Secretary.*

# Where are We?

Without any sort of formalities let me enter the theme, the theme on behalf of which the All India Scheduled Castes Federation is conducting a country wide agitation, the liberation of the sixty million untouchables of this unfortunate land. We are meeting here after a strenuous election campaign against the greatest political organisation, the Congress. But we are meeting on the eve of great changes in India, changes that were anticipated when the Labour Government came into power in Britain. The Cabinet Mission which is studying the political problem in India, would certainly make a decision on the constitutional progress of the country. We welcome it as we no more want to be ruled by the white man, but we are perturbed over the attitude of the Congress towards the Scheduled Castes as transfer of power may naturally come into the hands of this majority if it is done without safeguards for the untouchables. You might be knowing the Caste Hindu Press as one was overjoyed at the statement made in the House of Commons when the Prime Minister of England declared that the minorities will not be allowed to veto the political progress of the majority. We as a minority cannot but object to this views of the British Government if it was meant seriously. The majority and the minority theory used in Western democratic sense cannot be applied in the Indian situation. Here the majority party is a permanent majority based on religion and everybody knows that this is the complex feature of the Indian political situation.

The untouchubles in India are the largest minority, who want proper safe-guards for their social and political growth. The Congress attitude to the Scheduled Castes problem is reflected only through the propaganda carried on by Mahatma Gandhi on behalf of the All India Harijan Sevak Sangh. As we have seen, it was a thorough failure up to this day as it wanted only to remove the social disabilities of the untouchables based on Hindu religious practice. The Sangh was satisfied with only temple entry and this temple entry programme has proved utterly ineffective. It was a foolish idea to think that the Depressed Classes will be satisfied with opening a few temples here and there. It was a foolish idea that they will remain as loyal supporters of the Caste Hindus when the community was persecuted for centuries. In the place of cheese, Mahatma Gandhi wanted to satisfy us by giving chalk. But this time the Scheduled Castes were capable enough to realise the differences between the two. All the efforts taken by the Caste Hindus were directed to exclude us from sharing the political power which is the most essential weapon for a community to throw out its political and social slavery. The Caste Hindus and the Congress want us to be their political slaves also. That is why, they are thwarting the efforts of the All India Scheduled Castes Federation which is the only organisation to represent the true aspirations of the Untouchable India. We have no special quarrel with Mahatma Gandhi or the Congress if they were genuine in their attempts to solve the Scheduled Castes problem. It is a noble thing when Mahatma Gandhi is trying to identify himself with the 'Bhangies'. But let Mahatma Gandhi champion the political aspirations of the untouchables in the same spirit and earnestness. So far it has not happened like that and every effort he has undertaken had been reasonably suspected by us, because he never met the political demands of the community. He has expressly shown that he is hostile to the Political demands which we have put forth time and again before the country. That is why we are forced to believe that the programme of Harijan uplift conducted by Mahatma Gandhi is not in the interest of the untouchables but to protect the age-long vested interests of the Caste Hindus. That is why Mahatma Gandhi rejected Dr. Ambedkar's request for a political talk with the former. But we cannot forget that there was a time when the Congress and the Caste Hindus as a whole looked upon Dr. Ambedkar as the saviour of Mahatma Gandhi's life. The Poona Pact was effected only to save the life of Mahatma Gandhi. But both the Caste Hindns and Mahatma Gandhi himself forgot the greatest Political concession conceded by any oppressed people in the whole world.

The problem of the untouchables stands on a different footing from that of the Muslim problems or the problems of other minorities, like the Christians and the Sikhs. Mahatma Gandhi agreed that if there is any real minority in India it is the Untouchables. What safeguards then has he promised to this minority of six millions in order to have a fair and proper share in the life

of the country. Is it justifiable either by canons of morality or by social justice to satisfy that the untouchables should not ha~e any thing to do with the political power shared by the people in the country? When the Congress sticks on majority based on Western Parliamentary system why even that principle is not applied in the case of the Untouchables. It is here that we, the Untouchables differ from the Congress. It is on this point that we have organised to fight against the Congress in order to get our demands.

There is no use in hoping that the minorities problem will be by-passed by the British Government so that the Congress can hunt down the minorities as the Nazis did in Germany. Indian minority problem is based on social and religious factors and not on racial and numerical theory. Therefore it is essential to make a decision agreeable to all, as otherwise it will tend to the domination of the Caste Hindus over the untouchables and the Muslims. The Muslims are after all organised and they have already demanded a separate sovereign state. The Scheduled Castes have not put forth any such demands and they want only proper safeguards so that they should no longer be the victims of the Caste Hindus. The Scheduled Castes will never agree to assume a subordinate position in the future constitution of India. It is detrimental not only to the scheduled castes but also to the toiling millions in this land.

Let me request the Cabinet Mission that they will be committing a strategic and diplomatic blunder if the claim of the Congress to represent all is conceded and the Indian constitution is framed by a Congress Majority. The Untouchables are going to oppose it and they will never be a party to such a constitution. The British Government ruled India for more than 200 years. The Scheduled Castes were always loyal to the British Government because it gave them freedom to think and to act unlike the Caste Hindus. All the years the Scheduled Castes hoped for their final emancipation at the hands of the British Government not because we were against the independence of India but because we know that the Caste Hindus will not liberate us and that the British Government is demoratic in character and that such a Government can easily remove the disabilities of the Scheduled Castes. We can legitimately expect the same as it is the British Government that abolished slave trade in India and it gave equal treatment to the untouchables in the eye of law.

My last request is towards my own brethren who are assembled here. The future of our community does not depend on external factors. It is on the people of the community that the responsibility of liberating our people is vested. You will have to face now grim opposition from the Congress. But, for this, there is no other way but to organise ourselves on behalf of the All India Scheduled Castes Federation. We will have to prepare for the greater struggle as the Congress has shown dire hostility to our organisation and to our progress. The Congress will launch a programme of liberation of the Untouchables whether the government is run by the socialist Jawaharlal or Gandhi or Patel. It is a shame on the so-called progressive idealists of the Congress not to include the abolition of Bogar system in their election manifesto. When it has decided the abolition of the Zamindari system it could not make any promise to do away with forced labour which is the bane of our society. There is enough reason behind this. Abolition of Zamindari will help the landholders who are the middle class and the lower Middle Class Caste Hindus. Forced labour is exacted by this people on behalf of the Zamindari at present. But when the Zamindari is abolished and when the land is transferred to its occupants the forced labour will continue and it would be this time on behalf of the middle classes exacted by the middle classes. Thus our lot is not going to be improved through the changes in the land tenure. This is the kind of socialist Government that is envisaged by the socialists including Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. Let us tell these people that the Scheduled Castes will no longer be the slaves of the Capitalist Caste Hindus. Let us be prepared to shed our blood for the sake of our liberation and our existence.

Mrs. D. Velayudham's Presidential address, Lucknow Conference.

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## NOTE

Mrs. D. Velayudham, Managing Editor has severd all connections with our weekly "Jai-Bheem" Details will appear in the next issue.

N. HARI.
*Manager.*

## CLASH BETWEEN CASTE HINDUS AND UNTOUCHABLES HOUSES SET ON FIRE

*Nagpur*:

There was fresh trouble last night between Caste-Hindus and Mahars following accentuation of the tension which persisted in the city since election days.

Early this morning the situation took a serious turn. Stone-throwing and cases of arson were reported at Pachpaoli, the affected locality.

Stone-throwing by rival groups was followed by a clash between Hindus and Mahars when five or six houses were set on fire. It is learnt the fire services were able to save some of the houses from complete destruction. One house was completely destroyed.

This fresh outbreak has caused home excitement among the mill-hands In one textile mill the majority of workers refrained from work this Morning.

Fifteen arrests were effected by the police following disturbances this morning. In two clashes, one last night and the other this morning 14 were injured, one seriously. Thirteen houses were set on fire by rowdies, of which two were completely destroyed. Fires were put out by fire engines in other blazing houses and they were saved from wholesale destruction.

There was again recrudescence of trouble this evening in the same locality and the District Magistrate and District Superintendent of Police rushed to the spot to see the situation for themselves.

**Deputation to Labour Minister**

The situation in Nagpur resulting from the tension between Hinds and Mahars was explained to Mr. S. V. Gokhale, Labour Minister, to-day by a deputation of members of the Scheduled Castes' Federation They put before the Minister the difficulties with which S. C. mill-hands and other Mahars had to contend in the city since the communal trouble started in February last, and continued to persist still, occasionally assuming serious form.

The Labour Minister told the deputationists that he would ascertain the view-point of the Nagpur Textile Uuion on the causes of the present trouble in the city and then deal with the problem. He thought that a solution was not difficult if both the parties co-operated and decided to bury the hatchet.—A.P.I.

## General Secretary's Circular

I request all of you, as desired by the President of our Federation, to submit to me within three weeks detailed information about the total number of members enrolled so far, the number of branches, the fees collected so far, and other activities carried on. Besides I would like to have the names of office bearers of different branches.

I am making this appeal to you in the interests of the efficient working of our organisation. In the difficult circumstances obtaining in India to day, our organisation must be a closely knit unit and as such I should have all the facts at my disposal. I regrest to note that all my previous appeals for information and funds have not received proper response from Provincial branches

I am, therefore, taking this opportunity to request you to send me detailed information about the activities of the Federation in your Province. A detailed statement of accounts as well is an absolute necessity. Most of the provinces have not so far sent me their contributions of Rs. 50 per month to wards the maintenance of the Head Quarters. I would urge you to send that amount at your earliest convenience. Moreover, the 25 per cent share of membership fees, to be sent to the Head Quarters according to the constitution should also be sent.

Along with these reports, special attention should be paid to keep me informed about the elections to various Provincial Legislatures. How many candidates were put up on behalf of the scheduled castes Federation? How many were successful? Was there any hindrance and terrorisation by Congrees or any other organisatiou, while conduc ing the election campaigns? These are important issues and it would be advantageous to send this information in detail, so that we can move the Government in getting our grievances redressed.

I would further suggest that your branches should uudertake the following work immediately in hand.

I Enrolment of 5000 volunteers of Samata Sainik Dal in each district. 2. Enrolment of maximum number of members. 3. Propagation of our basic programme as enunciated by Honourable Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar. 4, Removal of internal and sectional differences. 5. More attention towards increasing the political consciousness amongs all sections of the Scheduled classes, including women and youths. 6. Reorgani sation in consultation wilh the president of A. I. S. C. F. of any district branches which have been found lagging behind in working & organisation 7. Propagation of the views and resolutions passed at Delhi by the working committee of the federation & presented to the British Cabinet Delegation by Honourable Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar.

In conclusion, while requesting you to send me the information asked for, I would press on you the necessity of sending monthly reports and accounts according to the constitution. If we work with enthusiasm, brothers, we can I am sure be a strong organisation and be a force to be recond with in the politics of our country.

Please send me a copy of the telgrams sent by you to the British Cabinet Mission supporting Honourable Dr. Ambedkar. Can you let me have the nnmber of such telegrams sent from your province.

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## Scheduled Caste Students Conferences

The third West-Godavari District Scheduled Caste Students' Conference was held at Nidadavole on the 25th and 26th of May. Mr. H. S. Gandane, opened the conference while Mr. K. Suryaprakasa Rao presided and Mr. N. Hari hoisted the flag. More than seven hundred students and a number of distinguished leaders and workers of the Scheduled Caste Federation attended the Conference. Pandit Polukonda Bhadraiah was honoured for his poetic talents. Mr. E. Vadapally, P. Gopalakrishna, P. Balakrishna also addressed the gathering. Resolution affirming confidence in Dr. Ambedkar among several others was passed.

The Kistna District Scheduled Caste students had their second annual conference in Chittigudur on 25th and 26th of May, Dr. K. Raghavulu, K. Suryaprakasa Rao, Govada Venkateswara Rao R. Ekambaranath and many others took active part in the conference and made it a grand success.

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### IMPORTANT

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In order to bring out the issues of "Jai Bheem" regularly in time we are contemplating to start a printing press of our own for which we need the cooperaion of all our well wishers.

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